1843
Restoring
The Order
of
Nature

PAPERS
OF
SHAKERS
14

New Lebanon Oct.r 7.th 1843.

Beloved Brother Rufus,

In the late conference meeting concerning the Sacred Roll, lately printed, I found there was some difference of opinion respecting the doctrine of restoring mankind back to the order of nature, from which man fell by disobedience. The promise that such as would return to that order, and prove faithful in it, should be blessed in their order, according to their faithfulness, as well as those that live under the law of grace, seemed not to meet the feelings of some then present.

Having previously had some labor on this subject, I feel fully satisfied respecting it, and think it will not be improper to express my feelings upon it, for the consideration of those who have entertained different sentiments concerning this subject.

The doctrine of chastity and sexual purity was plainly taught by our heavenly Parents when upon earth; and Believers have ever maintained this doctrine as essential to the true followers of Christ. The great objection of the world of mankind to such a doctrine is, that should it universally prevail, this world would soon be divested of its inhabitants, and the human race become extinct.

As we knew not the wise purposes of our heavenly Father concerning these things, the ~~purport~~ purport of the reply which we have heretofore been able to make to this objection was, that there would always be a sufficient portion of mankind, who would not take up this cross of self-denial, to support and maintain the population of the earth; of course there could be no danger of its being depopulated by the prevalence of our doctrine, as long as it shall be the will of God for the world to continue.

To this their usual reply has been, that our Society was, of course, wholly dependent for the supply of members, on those we call the wicked world, and to whom we disallow any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ; and they must live in the flesh and beget children, in order to suppy our Society with members, or our religion would soon come to an end for want of support. — This they advance as an unanswerable argument against the foundation and first principle of our faith of selfdenial.

In answer to this, we could [redacted] reply; That mankind, in a state of nature, were greatly lost from God, which none could deny. And as all needed salvation, our labor was to save all who wanted to be saved, and to gather into the ark of safety, all who were willing to gain salvation by faithful cross-bearing: for according to the doctrine of Christ, none can be saved in any other way. But as the gospel is free for all, we compel none to take up the cross against their own choice. If they think eternal salvation is not worth taking up a cross to obtain, they are at liberty to choose for themselves what course to take, and must receive their reward accordingly.

But notwithstanding all our reasons in favor of this self-denying doctrine, still the charge of maintaining such an uncharitable principle, that none could be saved but those who embraced our faith, and bore the same cross, has been constantly thrown out against the Society, by a flesh-pleading and flesh pleasing world.

They think it very uncharitable in us to suppose and

maintain the principle, that none can be the true followers of Christ, except those that take up a cross against the flesh, and live as we do. "If this be so, (say they,) then none else can be saved; and of course, all the human race, except a few Shakers, must go to hell and be damned." This is a very hard saying, to them, and very uncharitable in their view, and who can believe it?

But God, in his infinite wisdom, has revealed a way, ~~as~~ which at once shows his boundless charity, and displays his infinite mercy and goodness to a poor lost and blind world; and yet maintains his strict and impartial justice and benevolence to every creature of the human race; and finally secures to faithful Believers their just reward in the Kingdom of his grace, for all their faithful labors, their self-denying crosses, their numerous trials and severe sufferings ~~&~~ while here in this world.

For a number of years past, we have had repeated notifications by inspiration, that it was the purpose of God to overthrow the dominion of Satan, and restore mankind back to the order of nature; and that he is determined to effect this work by establishing a law and order for that portion of the children of men, who do not embrace the gospel of Christ, and come under the law of grace; that they shall return to the law of nature, given to man at the beginning, and keep it strictly and faithfully, or fall under the judgments prepared for the rebellious and disobedient.

It has also been predicted and declared by divine inspiration,

that those who shall freely submit to that law and order, shall have their leaders and rulers of their own order, chosen from among the most faithful of their order, and established by Divine authority to lead and govern them.

It has also been declared by prophetic inspiration, that those under the law and order of nature, will greatly honor & respect those under the law of grace, and look to Zion for counsel and instruction; and that nations and rulers under the law of nature, from reverence and respect to those of a superior order of God's chosen people, will bring their treasures of temporal bounties, and freely present as offerings to Zion, as was done in Solomon's day, while the temple was building, which was a type of the day & work of God now progressing in Zion, and will yet prevail in the world.

But how or when this work will be brought about, we know not: For altho God has declared that it shall be; yet he has not revealed the time when, nor the manner in which it will be brought to pass. But as he has declared that it shall be, therefore we can have no doubt of its coming to pass in his own time and manner; and tho we feel bound to believe his word; yet we can form no correct idea of the manner in which it is to be fulfilled till the time shall come, and be is pleased to reveal it to us.

When the time shall come for this order of nature to be established, those who come into it, will doubtless be blessed of God, according to their order, as really as those under the law of grace, provided they prove faithful in their order. As to the particular items of the law of nature, they have not been revealed to us; they have been set

forth in general terms only; such as abstaining from all wars and fightings, all contention and strife; to be honest and upright in all their dealings; to be guilty of no fraud nor deception, but to do to others as they would have others do to them; to come to their wives only for the purpose of procreation, and that only once in eighteen months. That they shall have faithful and upright lawgivers, and shall establish and maintain just and equitable laws and orders, and see that they are carefully and faithfully kept, &c.

Thus it appears that God will not suffer the works of the Devil to prevail in the land; but all things, both spiritual & temporal, shall be controled by Divine Wisdom; and that the rebellious and disobedient, who will be subject to no law, shall fall under Divine judgment; and as predicted by the prophet Zechariah, "Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongues shall consume away in their mouths.

The word of God to man, in the beginning, concerning the forbidden fruit, was, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." And to this day, mankind in a state of fallen nature, still continue under the power of this death, and are considered as "dead in trespasses and sin." Man was evidently brought into this state of death through the influence of the Devil, to whose word he yielded obedience; and in his fallen state he still continues to yield obedience to the Devil.

But God never intended that man should always remain in that state of death, and in obedience to the Devil, even while

in a state of nature. He has therefore provided a way of restoration and redemption through Christ; and this he will accomplish in his own time, and after his own manner.

Firstly: For the purpose of having a chosen people to worship him in spirit and in truth, here in this world, he has established his Zion on earth, and gathered a people, and given them the law of grace, that they might commence their travel in the regeneration while they remain in the earthly tabernacle. And those who will do this, will be owned blest and acknowledged as his chosen and peculiar people, in a spiritual state, as the tribes of Israel were in a natural state: for they were a type of the spiritual Israel now established on earth.

Secondly: He has also provided a way to restore back to the order and law of nature, given in the beginning, those of the fallen race who are not specially called to be subjects of the law of grace, while in this world; and these will comprize the largest portion of the human race. This is necessary, not only to take away the dominion of Satan over such a large portion of the world of mankind, which he has held nearly six thousand years; but also that they may be prepared, as soon as they enter eternity, to come directly into the work of redemption.

And may we not, with confidence in the wisdom and goodness of God, add our firm belief and reasonable expectation that these people, while living in obedience to the order and Law of nature, will furnish Zion with a constant supply of innocent members, who will not be so sunken and lost

in pollution and defilement, as are the present race, from which we are in the practice of gathering members in among us? Surely I think we can; for according to this doctrine, there is a bright prospect of it.

But the great objection in the minds of some, seems to arise from an impression that it is very inconsistent with the testimony of the gospel, that the law of nature and the law of grace should go forth simultaneously, or at the same time, as tho the children of men could have their choice between the two, and yet be under the blessing of God in choosing the former; because they consider that Zion is called wholly in the order of grace, and can have nothing to do with the works of nature; and because the followers of Christ are called out of the world; therefore they suppose that neither Christ nor his followers can have any thing to do with giving law to the children of nature, who still remain in the order of the world.

But let us enquire into this matter. Did not Christ, when on earth, preach both the law of nature and of grace? Did he not plainly declare in favor of the law of nature, in his sermon on the mount, when he said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one title shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled?" See Matt. v. 17. 18.

If it be said that this alluded to the law of Moses; so be it. The moral precepts of the law of Moses were but a transcript of the original law of nature, given at the beginning, in the

very institution of the creation, by which man was to be governed, Did not Christ preach the law of nature, or that which was founded on the law of nature, when he said, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say and do not?" Matt xxiii. 2. 3. And also when he said, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Matt vii. 12.

And again; When the young man came to him & said, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal life? Matt xix. 16. Did not Christ refer him to the moral precepts of the law? "Thou knowest the commandments, keep them". The young man asked, Which? Jesus said, "Thou shalt do no murder; Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; Honor thy father and mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The young man said, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?"

Here it appears that Jesus looked upon him and loved him; because he had been faithful to keep the law; and what greater blessing could any one, in the order of nature, reasonable desire, than to gain the love & approbation of the Son of God, by faithfully keeping the requirements of the law, in all its moral precepts?

Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in

heaven; and come and follow me." Here the Savior revealed the law of grace, by opening to the young man an order far superior to the order of nature, and invited him to enter into it.

Thus it appears that Christ first arraigned him up to the light he had received in the order of nature, and found him so far justified that he could love and bless him. His obedience to the law of nature had brought him to see that there was a superior and more perfect order, which had even brought him to the very door of the Savior's Kingdom, which was then opened by the Savior himself, for him to enter in. And had he accepted the call, and followed the Savior, in very deed, he would have gained an everlasting inheritance, and great would have been his reward for his former obedience to the law of nature.

But instead of receiving the kind invitation of the blessed Savior with joy and thankfulness, he flinched at the cross, and went away sorrowful. Thus he lost his former blessing, and shut the door of the Kingdom of heaven against himself. His riches, which he was unwilling to sacrifice, shut him out. For Christ plainly taught that those who flinched at the cross when called by the gospel, and returned to their former state, could not inherit the Kingdom of God.

And thus it must and will always be; the sound of the gospel trumpet first arraigns souls before the law of nature, or before that light which is given to regulate man in a state of nature. And if they are found faithful in that, they are loved and blessed of God, and by the Spirit of the Savior;

and the door of the perfect work under the law of grace, is opened to them, as rightful heirs of the Kingdom of Christ. And if they take up their cross and enter in, great will be their reward for their former faithfulness in the order of nature.

But if, like the young man, they flinch at the cross, all is lost; for they can no longer be justified in their former state, under the law of nature, after being called by the gospel, to a greater and purer work.

The testimony of Christ never did, and never will arraign souls before the light of the law of grace, till they are first brot. up to the law and order of nature: for in a state of nature they do not know the law of grace, and therefore cannot be required to obey it. But they are first arraigned before the light of the law of nature; for all their transgressions have been committed against that light. And until they are first convicted and make restitution on that ground, they can never enter into the superior work of the law of grace. But when this is done, they can then begin their travel in the regeneration, and become heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Thus we may see that the sound of the gospel trumpet proclaims both <u>the law of nature</u> and <u>the law of grace</u>.

Again: Did not Mother Ann's testimony first sound forth the law of nature to souls, when it arraigned them before the light of that law for all their transgressions? Surely it did; and these were the sins they were required to confess, to repent of, and make restitution for. She did not

arraign them for sins committed against the gospel light and law of grace; for these they had not yet received. When they had fulfilled the first requirement, they could then come under the law of grace, but not before.

But Mother's testimony always blessed souls in proportion to their obedience to their former light; and the Sacred Roll plainly declares the same. Mother, in her labours with those who were not awakened to a sense of the importance of taking up a full cross, addressed them thus; "If you are not willing to take up your cross and follow Christ, go and marry, and live lawfully, according to nature, and raise up a family; for of all lustful gratifications, that which has respect to posterity is the least sinful. And this is the sum and substance of all that is said by the Angel on that subject in the Sacred Roll.

This doctrine is not new: Our heavenly Parents, as well as the ancient prophets, have declared from the beginning, that the law would yet go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, to the nations of the earth — that God would judge the people by that law, even in their natural state, & rebuke strong nations afar off; and they should beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more; and that all the blessings foretold by the prophets, would be effected thereby.

And Father Joseph testified that this work would never be effected in the world, until the law and commandment went forth from Zion. Not that the children of Zion would be the immediate agents ~~to effect that work among the children of men~~ in the order of the world; but God, by the operation of his Spirit, would raise up agents among themselves, to effect the work in the order of nature. But these agents would be inspired by the light shining forth from Zion, and be guided by that law which God will send forth thro' her, whether they are sensible of it or not.

And has not this already begun to take place in the world? Have not almost all the moral institutions, for the reformation of mankind, been raised up since the establishment of the Church? Particularly such as respect the principles of peace, temperence and humanity; and much light has prevailed for some time past, and is still increasing, respecting the abominations of licentiousness, masturbation and all fleshly indulgences and other abuses of nature. And what is all this but an evidence of the spreading of divine light and the going forth of the law from Zion into the world. Tho this may be justly attributed to the invisible agency of Divine Providence; yet the dispensation of light and knowledge from Zion, through various channels, has doubtless been the means of enlightening mankind more than many are aware of.

How often was it declared by the ancient prophets, that the law should go forth from Zion, and the effects thereof were foretold. But if the Law of nature and the law of

grace are not both to go forth from Zion, how are these prophecies to be fulfilled? And again, If the order of nature is not to be restored, as well as the order of grace, how is the following prophecy of the prophet Zechariah to be fulfilled?

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." Zech. 14. 8, 9.

The four following paragraphs contain the prophets own explanation of his prophecy, given by inspiration, about the beginning of March 1841.

"And now, (saith the prophet Zechariah,) hear ye the word of God, all ye holy children of Zion! Behold the time is near at hand, yea, at the door, when Jerusalem, the tabernacle of God upon earth, which is now named, The Zion of the living God, the Holy Mount, will be prepared to fulfill, in a degree and order that hath never been done before, the prophecy shown unto me, by the visions of God.

"In that day shall living waters go out from Jerusalem, (or the Zion of God,) half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea; in summer and in winter shall it be." For there shall never again be a cessation of the flowings of these living waters; nor shall there ever be a season that the Sun of Righteousness shall cease his warming influences upon the earth, through the order of the divine work.

"Half of these waters shall flow from Zion toward the sea of the waters of nature, to restore and establish my laws and order, for all the nations of the earth, in the natural state; and half of them shall flow into the holy sea of the New Creation, and shall return again from this living fountain, and flow, and flow through the world, and water all the plants of the seeds of Heaven. And they shall be nourished by the warmth of the genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness, until they shall grow into the order of my eternal creation, saith the Lord God of all things.

"The flowing operations of these living waters shall never cease; but they shall increase into greater and greater degrees, in their appointed times, until the day shall come, that the "Lord shall be known as King over all the earth. And there shall be one Lord, and his name one," among all the nations, according to their order."

Thus far the prophet Zechariah; and his testimony is confirmed by several others given by inspiration, particularly by the holy Angels of prophecy, given at different times in the Church at the Holy Mount.

But if the order of nature is never to be restored, at least, so far that the people therein are subject to the moral law, and the law of times and seasons, appointed of God for the procreation of offspring, how can he posibly be called their King? Upon this supposition the above prophecy can never be fulfilled while time endures, Neither can the following testimony of the Apostle Peter be fulfilled.

"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was

preached unto you; whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, since the world began." For surely if the order of nature cannot be restored, we see no way for the restitution of all things to be effected.

Not that we suppose that the pure life in which nature was originally created, will ever be restored in that order; but the moral law of God, and his order of times and seasons must be restored, or the preceding prophecy, and many more of the like nature, found in the scriptures, can never be fulfilled.

But it may be objected, that if God is to restore the order or covenant of nature to any people, he must also restore an Altar, whereon the transgressor can offer his sin offering, or he must be forever lost: And also that wherever God had a covenant people, he always provided such an altar for the transgressor, by which he might be restored to his covenant relation again; and that no such Altar is appointed in the Sacred Roll.

All this is true; but we must consider that God is under no obligation to man to reveal the whole plan of his work at once; nor do we learn from all the history of his works, that he ever does it. He has sent forth his word, to arraign mankind before the light of that law of nature which he has established, and declares them guilty of base violating that law; and that if they live in nature,

they must return to the obedience of that law, or they can receive no blessing from him, but must fall under his judgments.

There are indeed, as yet, no people on earth, that have entered into that order; and therefore no altar has yet been provided for the transgressor. But God will raise up agents in the world, by whom he will effect that work; and when the way is sufficiently prepared, he will provide an altar; for he will doubtless appoint those agents as witness for him, before whom the transgressor can make confession, and by repentence be restored again to favor, and set out anew.

Upon the whole it appears reasonable to believe, that by a fair examination and enlightened consideration, all objections to the going forth of the law of nature and the law of grace, and both being simultaneously proclaimed from Zion, may be justly removed, and all may unite in one faith, and be no longer divided in sentiment, but be of one mind on this important and interesting subject, which so nearly concerns all mankind.

Texts of Scripture Isa XI. 9

An Extract from

A prophetic Communication from the prophet Joel:

Given by Inspiration January 10th 1841.

"Behold I will raise up governments among all people, which shall not be founded in ambition, blood and tyranny. But the most wise and virtuous shall be appointed to rule. They shall seek peace and maintain it at whatever sacrifice. They shall make wise and just laws, and execute them in justice and mercy. Yea, they shall seek the good of their people, and be examples of virtue, and of keeping their own laws. And those that will not do these things, shall be thrown out, and others shall be appointed, through the operations of my Providence, and by the most virtuous of the people, who will be faithful to their trust.

"Then shall the holy vine, and plant of my everlasting kingdom grow and flourish, and in its times, shall spread through all nations, kindreds and tongues. And wherever the order of <u>natural government</u> shall be established, the unrighteous shall have no power to oppress or harm my holy chosen people; for I will set the bounds that they cannot pass. Nay, the governments of the world shall have no power over my chosen people. But the rulers of the land shall honor Zion with their offerings and best gifts; and they shall be thankful & rejoice to receive counsel and oracles from her wise and inspired children.

"Then shall be fulfilled that which is written in the Book of Revelations; "The kings of the earth do bring their glory & honor into the holy city."

Extract 2d. from the same.

"Thus, say the Eternal Parents; Shall the powers of darkness be permitted to disannul forever, any law or order which we have

appointed? Nay, saith Almighty Power. Behold we created the heavens and the natural world, as a probationary stage between the heavens & the dark world. We also made man in our own image, as our representative on earth, and gave him our laws of propagation.

"But man by disobedience, violated those laws, and obeyed the dark and fallen spirits; and thus his nature became corrupted; — and by their influence all his offspring have been propagated in the fire of lust and corruption. The dark spirits sought by this means, to propagate their own power in man, and to supplant our law and order of propagation, through all the ages of the natural world. As we live, this shall not stand.

"For behold, many witnesses shall be raised up, from time to time, to testify against the violations of the law of nature. And in the latter ages of the world, after our judgements and reforming work have swept through the earth, and thinned it of its wicked inhabitants, we will, in our own appointed day and time, raise up a people who shall show forth the order of nature that we appointed in the beginning.

"These shall keep that law, by never acting in that nature, in any manner, except for the purpose of raising up an offspring in the times & seasons that our laws shall appoint. Unto them it shall be revealed, that they are in an order inferior to the new and spiritual creation. And an inheritance in that order shall be placed as an object of hope to them, upon conditions of obedience. This was the state in which we first created man.

"And all such as keep our laws, in this respect, shall defeat

the powers of darkness, and be an honor to our creation. And when their times come, they shall be called into our spiritual work and kingdom. And if they obey that call, they shall be blessed & honored for their obedience in the natural order.

"Yet all the ages of the natural world must come to an end, and natural offspring shall cease, when all our laws & orders shall have been fulfilled, obeyed and made honorable in the natural state. For natural generation doth not belong to the new creation of God, and never can have any part therein. But the Eternal Kingdom shall increase through endless ages, saith Eternal Power & Wisdom."

Extract 3. From a divine communication of the holy Angel of light and glorious Prince of Prophecy, who inspired the ancient prophets. Given by Inspiration at the Holy Mount of God. January 5th 1842.

"Michael and his mighty hosts of Angels have come forth, and are waging war against the great Adversary & all his powers of darkness. This war will never cease until they are defeated, and driven out of any power or hold in the heavenly state. And the hosts of Michael will follow these dark spirits & powers, and overthrow their high towers, and pull down their strong holds, and demolish their high places throughout the world.

"Then as fast as the way is thus prepared, they will build up and establish the perfect order of the New heavens and New earth, in which the dark spirits and powers shall have no habitation, nor place of strength. These Angels will also build up a perfect state of the order of nature in the natural world, (in degrees,) for a time, until the days thereof are fulfilled. Then shall the natural order & state of the world pass away.

"The manifestations of the present day of visitation, both of light and perfect work, have been and will be greater in and among the Israel of God, than the Eternal Spirit ever before dispensed to the children of men. And the same prophetic light, and the same war and work of Michael will follow in the world, after the visible displays thereof are more closed and withdrawn from Zion. I say, the same light & work will follow, both in the providential and spiritual orders in the world, and will progressively operate, according to their state, and what is required of them, to prepare the way for the natural order, which the Creator is about to establish, in his times, among all nations and people."

"Thus saith the Lord; I have come to declare my laws and my statutes to the children of men. And such as are for the law of nature, let them keep the law of nature, which I have sent forth, and the blessing and protection of an overruling Providence shall rest upon them for the same. And such as are for the law of grace, let them keep the law of grace, which can have no part or place in the works of natural generation." Sacred Roll, page 44 Sec. 33 & 34.

"Fear God and keep his commandments, all ye inhabitants of earth, that His outstretched arm of mercy may go with you through time, and support you in eternity. His laws of nature keep, and they will protect you in that state, untill He sendeth forth a further word to you, which will be in His own way, time and season. Mortal clay knoweth not from whence it will proceed." Ibid page 210. Sec. 94.

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O Lord wilt thou a blessing send
Upon thy little flock
'Tis on thy mercy we depend
Thou art our only rock
Thy hand has kept us hitherto
In union to increase
This heavenly way we will pursue
For all thy paths are peace

[illegible] humble contrition [illegible]

Oh True Virtue

~~O come thou true virtue thou~~ bright angel
And spread thy bright wings over me
O lead me on safety where there is no night
O to set my needy soul free
O be thou forever a light to my path
That I may not stumble nor fall
Deliver my soul from the power of death
Upon thee I now humbly call